transferred the business of 17 estates in the 'concession area' as a going concern to a new Private Limited company called Kannan Deven Hills Plantations Company Private Limited (KDHP) immediately after the close of business as on 31st March, 2005. The transfer has been funded through a mix of equity, bank loans and subordinated debt from Tata Tea. The usage of land would be governed by the provisions of the lease deed and shall be exercised in accordance with all legal safeguards as necessary. The legal issues involved in the transfer of land rights are to be examined by the concerned State Governments.

Liberalisation of norms for concessional duty on crude palm oil

2944. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has liberalized certain norms for concessional duty on crude palm oil as per media reports; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) The Central Government has revised range of total carotenoid content (as beta carotene) from 500mg/kg-2500mg/kg to 250mg/kg-2500mg/kg and acid value from 2 to 4 for crude palm oil, for being eligible for the customs duty of 80%. This, however, will be subject to actual user condition *i.e.* for manufacture of refined oil, refined palmolein, vanaspati, bakery shortening or inter-esterified fats only.

Production and export of spices

2945. SHRI CHO. S. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total quantity and value of each of the spices produced in the country during the last three years;

(b) what is the quantity of spices consumed locally in the country;

(c) what is the total quantity of spices exported alongwith its value during the last three years with individual breakup of these spices; and